



Mr. Williams

Thank you for attending the Burnaby North Student-Led Walkabout!

I am very happy to meet with you and answer any questions you may have about this year's English class.

I hope to encourage an interest in reading and literature, and provide students with opportunities to think critically, and improve their written and oral communication skills. Students will focus on studying genres of literature as a class (short fiction, novel, poetry, drama), and they will also select their own texts to respond to throughout the year, and their own topics of inquiry to explore.

Assessment/ Evaluation:

Because students become better writers over time with practice, the grading of the class will be *cumulative* in nature – term marks will not necessarily be averaged to calculate a final grade. We become better writers over time with practice, and evaluation should reflect this.

Students will receive regular feedback for their writing in the form of descriptive comments and rubrics, and have been given writing portfolios for their compositions. Most of the writing students do will be in class, unless they are told otherwise. Some assignments will be completed in only one class, while for other assignments, students will have the opportunity to plan, draft, and revise their writing and also receive feedback before finishing a final copy.

It is important for students to see that their mark in class will be a reflection not only of “points” accumulated, but of the overall proficiency they have reached in their speaking and writing.

Reading:

Reading widely is the best way to improve one's vocabulary and composition skills – and it's fun too! Each day begins with silent reading, so students should bring their own novel to class. If they finish their book, students need to bring a new book to read. Students will be expected to write responses to their novels and share their reading with the class, and their reading may become part of their larger inquiry questions later on.

I believe everyone can enjoy reading -- it's just a matter of finding the right book!

I look forward to a fun and productive year, and please contact me if you have any questions.

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Thank you for attending the Burnaby North Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences!

How can I help my son/daughter with English?

1. **Build a climate of words at home.** The basis of strong reading and writing is good conversation – in English. Children grow into stronger control of language when adults share rich conversations about experiences. Ask your son/daughter, “What’s something you learned today?” rather than, “How was school?”
2. **Let your son/daughter see you write often:** you are both a model and a teacher. If your child never sees you writing at home, they gain an impression that writing only occurs at school. What you do is as important as what you say. Have your son/daughter see you writing notes, e-mails, lists, etc. and share these with your child. Ask for their opinion. If it’s not perfect, making changes in what you write confirms for your son/daughter that revision is a natural part of the writing process.
3. **Let your child see you reading English materials.** Again, you are a model for him/her. Talk to your child about what you are reading. Make regular trips to the library and read different materials (fiction, non-fiction, magazines, blogs, etc.). Consider a magazine subscription for a gift, or a special trip to the bookstore. Value Village is a great place to purchase cheap used books to help build a home library.
4. **Provide a suitable space for your son/daughter to read and write.** It should be free from clutter, quiet (away from T.V., stereo, etc.) and consistent. It should be comfortable and have good lighting, and access to a dictionary and a thesaurus.
5. **Establish a reading time for your child** (20-30 minutes before dinner or bed, for example). As often as you can, join your son/daughter for all or part of this time. Take turns reading to one another.
6. **Be as helpful as you can when your child is reading and writing.** Forget whatever negative experiences you may have had in school. Let them read to you and support his/her efforts to correct spelling, usage, punctuation. Resist temptation to be critical and rejoice in effort and ideas.
7. **Be alert to occasions when your son/daughter can be involved in reading and writing English.** Helping with grocery lists, sending holiday/birthday cards, thank you notes, letters, etc. are all supportive of the processes we all want to support. Encourage frequent writing and reading!
8. **Watch educational English television together.** These programs can help support English language and literacy development, and provide a great way for both you and your child to learn together.
9. **Encourage your son/daughter to spend time with native English speakers.** They can join teams, councils and clubs at school.
10. **Encourage activities that require reading.** Cooking/baking requires your child to read recipes; constructing a model car/kite requires him/her to read directions; bird-watching may lead to using a reference book to identify types of birds.

Research shows that reading and writing are complementary skills. Children who read in English, and read widely, become better readers and writers and more confident speakers of the English language. As a parent, you are important to your son/daughter as a role model, facilitator and supporter of his/her efforts. Thank you for your support of your child’s learning!